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ABSTRACT

The study has as its purpose the examination and comparison of career education movements in the United States and Great Britain and is perhaps best described as a pilot effort. Specific questions addressed included: (1) How do career education efforts in the two nations compare in terms of national commitment, philosophy, and students served? (2) What similarities and differences exist between the two nations with regard to career education program structure and focus? (3) What career education procedures, practices, and materials appear to be utilized by educators in both Great Britain and the United States? In order to develop the proper perspective for comparison, a rather brief summary of the career education movement in the United States is presented. This is followed by a similar summary of career, or to use the British terminology, careers education in Great Britain. Finally, a comparison of the career education movements and programs in the two countries is made. Career and careers education may be seen as integral parts of the school curriculum. In each case, emphasis has been placed on the involvement of youngsters in learning about and preparing to engage in work. (Author)

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CAREER EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES AND GREAT BRITAIN: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS[1]

Curtis R. Finch and Geoffery W. Cooksey[2]

Overview

Over the past several years, education leaders at the national, state, and local levels have placed tremendous emphasis on the implementation of career education. Millions, if not billions of dollars have been expended in support of the career education movement. Several federal agencies have allocated funds for career education. Of particular note, of course, are the various career education models which were first funded by the U.S. Office of Education and, more recently, the National Institute of Education. Over one-half of the states have officially established career education programs while many others are taking steps in that direction. Hundreds, perhaps thousands of local school districts and schools have done the same. Taken together, these models and programs represent a significant investment in career education in terms of time and resources. Yet, in many respects, the collective efforts at national, state, and local levels represent little more than a good start in the direction of establishing truly comprehensive career education implementation strategies.

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As educators at the local level eagerly wait for implementation strategies to emerge, they may themselves be faced with the actual assignment to establish a new career education program. In many cases, local education agencies have looked to each other for help with the implementation process and there is no doubt that professional "show and tell" activities have benefited those who are seeking ways to place career education in their schools. Compendiums such as Career Education: The State of the Scene (Office of Career Education, 1974) have been invaluable sources of information for those who are attempting to establish career education programs.

While it is certainly logical to look to each other for assistance with career education implementation, seldom do we explore the efforts ~~that currently carried on by~~ other nations have been involved in. Just as the ostrich buries its head in the sand, we often ignore education beyond our geographic boundaries. If we do not look at programs operating in other countries, we perceive little of the relevance to our own situation. The fact is: we can learn some important lessons from other nations. A case in point is Wanner's (1973) analysis of French legislation on vocational and technical education. This paper illustrates the value of making contemporary studies in comparative education so that experiences of nations can be shared. Such sharing could well be an aid to solving common problems.

That which follows is an attempt to bridge the gap in our knowledge of career education. This study has as its purpose the examination and comparison of career education movements in the United States and Great Britain and is perhaps best described as a pilot effort. While every attempt has been made to insure that a comprehensive study was conducted, the authors were limited in terms of geographic distance and available time.

Thus, the result of our labors represents something in the nature of a preliminary document. Specific questions which we have addressed included: (1) How do career education efforts in the two nations compare in terms of national commitment, philosophy, and students served? (2) What similarities and differences exist between the two nations with regard to career education program structure and focus? (3) What career education procedures, practices, and materials appear to be utilized by educators in both Great Britain and the United States?

In order to develop the proper perspective for comparison, a rather brief summary of the career education movement in the United States is presented. This is followed by a similar summary of career or, to use the British terminology, careers education in Great Britain. Finally, a comparison of the career education movements and programs in the two countries is made.

Career Education in the United States

Although the term itself is relatively new, antecedents of career education extend back to the early part of this century. Concern about the effect that modern business and industry might have on the individual led educational leaders to include the rudiments of a career education emphasis in their educational goals statements as early as 1918 (Commission, 1918). More recent national level goal statements (e.g., Educational Policies Commission, 1938; Proceedings, 1955) have included areas closely related to career education. Emphasis placed on the life adjustment process in the late 1930's and 1940's was, likewise, a response to educational needs in an industrial society. This movement, which evolved from John Dewey's educational philosophy, contained many of the elements considered to be

essential in contemporary career education. The pioneer work of Frank Parsons and development in the area of vocational guidance appears as another tangible precurser of career education. Subsequent development of the thought that vocational guidance and education should be unified (Stephens, 1970) finds its natural outlet in the contemporary perceptions of career education. A concurrent and more empirical basis for career education may be seen in the extensive efforts of career development researchers and theorists. Super, Rowe, Holland, and others have made educators aware of the complexities associated with career decisions and the need to account for these in the education process.

In summarizing career education's antecedents, Herr (1972) indicates that "virtually every concept which is presently embodied in career education has been advocated at some point in American education." Thus, career education appears to represent a fusing of many educational concerns; some of which are relatively recent and others that are fairly well established. Career education is a current response to these concerns and one which hopes to speak to them in a more inclusive manner than has been done in the past.

It might be said that career education made its national debut in 1971. At that time, then Commissioner of Education, Sidney Marland, presented a plea for major reform in American education (1971). Although the concepts presented by Marland were essentially the same as those advocated by Herr (1969) and Gysbers (1969), this marked the first time such advocacy had been declared at the national level. Marland proposed that American education be restructured around the concept which he termed career education. Although he chose not to define this concept, the former Commissioner allocated a significant number of dollars to its development.

By mid-1971 several prototype career education models had been funded by the U.S. Office of Education. These models initially represented alternate strategies to the implementation of the concept. These included the employer-based, home-based, rural/residential-based, and school-based comprehensive career education models.

Greatest financial support was provided to Ohio State University's Center for Vocational Education for the development of a comprehensive school-based career education model. The model was conceptualized as extending from kindergarten through grade twelve and included as its basic elements career awareness, career exploration, and career preparation (Center for Vocational Education, 1972). Emphasis was placed on the infusion of career education objectives and corresponding learning activities across the K-12 continuum. Although this project was initially funded as a capstone effort, it was soon realized that few relevant materials were available for inclusion in the model. Consequently, a great deal of time and effort has gone into the development and field testing of materials that may be used to meet the model's career education objectives.

Although fewer federal dollars were allocated to the employer-based, home-based, and rural/residential-based models, each of the three efforts represented viable alternatives to career education implementation (Hohenshil, 1975). The employer-based model was designed to have communities serve as classrooms. Emphasis was placed on providing youngsters (particularly 13 to 18 year olds) with exposure to a variety of realistic work settings and, at the same time, meet educational requirements for high school graduation. The home-based model sought to use the home as a learning center where young adults (18 to 25 years) could be provided with meaningful career learning experiences. Audio-visual technology was

chosen as the means by which home-based persons could be reached and given information about careers. A career education extension service was proposed which would serve as a liaison between home-based populations and career information agencies. The rural/residential-based model was designed to improve the economic and social conditions of rural disadvantaged families through intensive career education programs. As part of the model, a center was developed to provide these families with intensive experiences in a residential environment.

Although these models ultimately achieved varying degrees of success, they had a major impact on the total career education movement. States and local education agencies began to recognize that career education was not a "one night stand" and started to explore the potential which it had for educational reform. The fact that each of the four models represented a federal commitment to explore career education appeared to stimulate many similar kinds of exploratory efforts. Within two years after Marland had presented his speech, a great demand developed for materials that could be incorporated into local career education programs and a number of states made strong commitments to the implementation of career education by allocating dollar resources to this end. By 1974, state level support for career education was indeed substantial. At that time, 42 states had designated persons to serve as state coordinators of career education, 35 states had approved career education position statements, 25 states had included career education as a part of their budgets, and 25 had approved state plans for career education (Office of Career Education, 1974).

Even though its greatest impact has been at the K-12 level, the career education movement spread rapidly to the post-secondary sector as well. A number of two-year and four-year post-secondary institutions picked up

the career education banner and designed programs which incorporated many of the components from comprehensive models. If the programs cited by the Office of Career Education (1974) are representative of post-secondary efforts, we may be assured that two-and four-year colleges will be giving increased attention to career education as an integral part of their offerings.

One valid criticism of career education in the United States has been its lack of definition. During the several years following Marland's benchmark presentation, concern about this began to build among educators and non-educators alike. Some said that it was extremely difficult, if not impossible, to implement career education if its scope could not be defined while others stated that it was easy to have successful career education programs since the various factors associated with success were not fully explicated. Response to these concerns, as well as others associated with career education, took the form of authorization for an Office of Career Education at the federal level. This office was designated to perform a coordination function with regard to career education as well as monitor various federally funded career education activities. Approximately $10 million dollars in career education grants have been distributed through this office each year since its inception in 1974.

Soon after the Office of Career Education had been established, its director, Kenneth Hoyt, prepared a U.S. Office of Education policy paper which provided a much needed framework for career education. This document (Hoyt, 1974) represents a federal level position regarding career education which has helped to solidify the movement. Basically, career education is viewed in this document as "a response to a call for educational reform." Career education may be seen as responding to a number of deficiencies

associated with American education and going about this in a comprehensive manner. Its generic definition is provided in this position paper as "the totality of experiences through which one learns about and prepares to engage in work as part of her or his way of living." The paper goes on to develop a number of basic assumptions about career education, tasks for initial implementation of the concept, and learner outcomes for career education which should serve as grist for further development of the career education movement.

In terms of career education's future in the United States, it is difficult to chart an exact course. It appears that, with continued support at the federal level, states and local education agencies will, likewise, lend their support to the movement. The depressed national economy may perhaps be given some of the credit for the movement's growth as many have experienced the lack of congruence between education and work on a first-hand basis. Although career education's fate will certainly not be determined solely by the state of the nation's economy, its growth might well be affected in some way by this factor. A bill introduced into the House of Representatives on December 4, 1975 may represent a major development for career education in years to come. This proposed legislation, which is cited as the "Elementary and Secondary Career Education Act of 1976" has as its purpose "to assist States and local educational agencies to increase the emphasis they place in elementary and secondary schools on job awareness, exploration, decision making, and planning." The passage of this bill (H.R. 11023) would surely lend great support to an already strong national career education movement.

Careers Education in Great Britain

The development of careers education in England since World War II is closely linked with the development of comprehensive education over the same period. The principles which underlie both were inevitably and obviously the same--an increasing concern for the total personal and social growth of young people as well as for their academic attainment; the desire to shape a more just, thoughtful and caring society; the sheer brute economic needs which could no longer tolerate the waste of so many youngsters of average ability through early rejection by and inadequate provision within a crudely selective and segregating education system. The process has not been one of parallel acceleration, however; it has been rather as if the two spheres were linked by a strong elastic and the motion of either one has at different times provided added impetus for the other. On occasions, indeed, they may well have restrained or distorted each other's progress.

The selective school of the 1950s was little concerned with careers work. Catering to the most able 20% or less of the population, its sights were fixed on the 6th form, University and Training College entrance at 18. Teachers' ambitions were often directed toward an increased share of 6th form work, and GCE 'O' level at 16 was primarily a step their students took on the way to more advanced work. Teachers regretted those who left before 'O' level, applauded those who had examination success (on the whole teachers had chosen their subjects for them at 14) and went straight into the slightly unsavory worlds of commerce and industry, but reserved their profound praise for the 6th and beyond. How could they do otherwise? Teachers had trodden the same path. The youth employment officer who

occasionally visited school was either mistrusted as a threat to turn the minds of well-oriented youngsters, or tolerated as a means of relieving teachers of the burden of less successful, less well-oriented students.

The secondary modern school coped differently. Its students were destined for work and not the professions! While literacy and numeracy were still fundamental necessities, craft work, social studies, cookery, building, typing, even extended expeditions in school time were to be found in their curriculum. Perhaps the comforting belief that the least able are naturally talented with their hands was still too much in evidence; but the most successful secondary modern schools offered a wider range of experiences relevant to actual living in the local community. Further, many of these schools proved that academic attainment was well within the grasp of "non-selected" children; equally, many did not. The youth employment officer (YEO) was a familiar visitor and direct contact with the working world common. Teachers were sometimes involved in direct job negotiations for their students, and careers work (primarily job descriptions by visitors) was an accepted concept. It was organized either by the enthusiast or by the relegated conscript.

In one way (imperceptible perhaps at the time but very significant for the future) the secondary modern school and the selective school were alike. If the secondary modern school was becoming more knowledgeable about "jobs," how to get them and how to keep them, who to contact and who to ask for help--the 6th form tutors of the selective school were sometimes very well informed about entry to higher education--what degree courses were developing, what colleges of technology offered degrees, what universities required what and, above all, what these courses could lead to in terms of subsequent careers. Inevitably as 6th forms and higher

education expanded, career choice became more complex, and the implications of decisions more pressing of discussion and investigation. A student's choice between hons history and a degree in industrial management provided his or her tutor with an acute learning situation. Moreover, the significance of earlier subject choices at 14 began to make itself felt. Latin, Greek, and ancient history at 'O' level may not close the doors to a degree in social psychology, but if they have pushed out economics, statistics, and human biology on the way, the hinges begin to creak.

The coming together of selective and secondary modern school staffs in the new comprehensives of the fifties (over 15% of the nation's children had "gone comprehensive" by 1960) gave a great impetus to careers work. It was possible for the first time to look at the whole range of ability and see the "jobs"/"professions" split as part of a continuum of student aspiration and to fuse together the two growing types of expertise. People share developments best when they clearly have something to offer to each other. Larger staffs, better resources, a deeper sense of local commitment, and above all, the sharing of attitudes about all children and their futures, enlarged the concept of "careers" and gave it a new value in schools. Careers departments emerged, with senior staff stimulating and coordinating their growing functions; careers "programs," still largely job descriptive and based upon an information-giving style, took shape and were reshaped annually. The youth employment officer began to be more than a visitor and the careers room a place where people met, ideas were exchanged, and traditional postures unbent. While re-learning produced its inevitable tensions and conflicts in subject departments ("but they'll never get through the exams...."; "you don't call that education...."; "I couldn't possibly....";

"we never needed to do this before....") the careers area was fresh and exciting enough to develop immediate momentum.

The national picture was still far from rosy, of course, with statistics indicating that average expenditure on careers provision was then about three pence per secondary child per year. Other factors held back what could have been a major shift in careers thinking. Comprehensive schools which had to compete self-consciously in academic terms with continuing selective schools and systems of streaming and banding sometimes undermined the explicit social and personal concerns of schools by implicit contradictions. The comprehensives of the early 1960s were characterized by two major styles of curriculum organization--the open choice for the able of seven or eight separate subjects (children do best at what they want to do) and the more restricted choice for the average in which, for the best of motives, many children were directed to semi-vocational courses in engineering, nursing, woodworking, building, or shorthand and typing. Career interest, obvious relevance, and local opportunity were all reasons behind the second style which was often supported by careers staff. Experience showed that such courses rarely resulted in students choosing a career based upon their vocational course. Too many variables made their appearance during the two years of the course or later. In setting up this type of curriculum, administrators were often interpreting far too narrowly the influence careers motivation may have upon learning and were too easily sacrificing the width of a balanced general education. It was natural enough at the time, but was an example of the way in which the energy of career concern temporarily distorted the overall development of some comprehensive school curricula. It categorized students too early,

based too much prediction upon career fantasy and conveniently reinforced the academic banding system by once more separating jobs and professions.

Two further developments were needed within the comprehensive school before careers work and its associated courses could grow into the concept of careers education and thus influence society to make persons more sensitive to what education was about. Two such thrusts were already in action in the early '60s; they were in

a) curriculum development, arising from the Beloe Report of 1961, immensely reinforced by the establishment of CSE (Certificate of Secondary Education) in 1963 and helped along by the work of the Schools Council for Curriculum and Examinations, set up in 1964; and

b) the development of much better organized systems of tutorial care (pastoral care was the phrase of the '60s) through which responsibility for students' personal, social and, inevitably, career growth became a stated, professional commitment of the institution.

CSE was established in response to the school's need to provide nationally acceptable examination courses for the majority of students, for whom GCE was unsuitable in its strongly academic style. Its fundamental characteristics were (and still are) teacher control of syllabi and examinations, school-based or like-minded-school-based curricula, recognition through internal and continuous assessment of ongoing achievement rather than single-session testing, and a deep involvement of teachers in rethinking the range of learning experiences appropriate for students between the ages of 14 and 16. The raising of the school leaving age from 15 to 16 was already in the air (it finally happened in 1972) and much of

Schools Council's early work was devoted to curriculum development in the CSE or school leaver area. All schools felt the impact of CSE with the exception of those selective schools which are still wondering about it in the mid '70s. The effect of this (linked as it was with equivalent GCE grades) was to provide a realistic and recognized qualification incentive for nearly all students, to strengthen the determination with which their needs were to be explored and to make acceptable as a natural part of the curriculum, integrated courses in social studies, personal development, and "the world of work."

The elastic began to scretch again, but this time it was the sciences, crafts, languages, and geography which provided the impetus. They had resources at hand, experiences to explore, and pent-up energy to translate into new and lively learning situations. Off they shot while "careers work" in the classroom struggled on in its information-giving way, under-resourced, under-staffed, and still widely unrecognized. The frustrations of the time (frustrations are magnified by others' obvious progress) show clearly: the conferences on "school to work," the number of careers pamphlets which began to defy storage and retrieval, the constant call for better careers work allowances, the coming together of teachers, YEOs, national associations and local associations, the establishment of the Association of Careers Teachers with its modest proposals for careers rooms, slots on the timetable and financial resources. The tendency to "go it alone" in such circumstances (establish Careers Departments separate from the curricular and pastoral pattern of the school) was strong. If it worked in responding to the immediate need, that seemed all important. The wider vision might come later.

Help for such a vision was around through marked developments in the area of pastoral or tutorial care. The house system, common in most schools for 50 years, had always had its prime functions as stimulating school spirit and inter-house sporting competitions. As schools became larger, as they and their children faced more complex choices, so they had to become more open and responsive to their local communities, social and industrial; consequently, the house or year system developed with much more of a guiding, advising, contacting and eventually counseling function. Size made possible (and also revealed to be necessary) guidance activities that smaller schools had rarely considered. Detailed personal guidance shifts the posture of the guide; when carried out comprehensively, it also shifts the posture of the institute.

By 1970, individual and general guidance was advancing constructively, supported by a large-scale review of how children learn and how the general curriculum can reflect their total, rather than academic, development. "Careers" (the "work" part was now being dropped) was slowly becoming respectable in schools, but dangerously respectable since it had not yet done its curriculum homework.

The curriculum problem seemed to center upon several areas: (1) that schools were still concentrating on an information-giving process, directly or through others even less adept than teachers; (2) that schools were giving information which did not relate to children's experience or provide occasionally the sudden, spreading illumination of understanding; (3) that teachers were asked to do"careers" without any intense personal transmutation of the curriculum material they were purveying, much of which was outside their own experience; and (4) that age 14 was too late to start teaching "careers."

It was obvious that careers education should include the same types of involving, active learning situations that were used elsewhere in the curriculum. Simulation, individual and small group work, and learning by doing became methods of translating information into education. This sort of curriculum development was a desperately tough task, but a rewarding one.

It is this same task that was undertaken by the Schools Council in its Careers Education & Guidance Project, set up in 1971 with a joint financing from national industry. It was recognized that while information about careers existed in embarrassing profusion, relatively little had been done on a national scale to stimulate the production of curriculum material which might enable students to "rehearse" careers roles and experiences in the classroom. Without such "rehearsal," (such active involvement in situations analagous to working reality, but without its total complexity) choice can be illusory. The project started with a foundation year's materials based upon a monthly "newspaper," Framework, which was appropriate for 3rd year students (13 to 14 year olds) and has now moved on to the 14-18 age range. Its method of working is participatory with local groups of schools and industry supplying ideas, testing, and criticism. Its present span is for five years and it has already established the firmest curriculum links between careers and personal development and guidance. The concepts which underlie it indicate the shift from "careers work" to "careers education." The first materials from this project were tested in 170 schools during 1973.

Several other points related to the careers education movement are worthy of note:

1972 saw Schools Council Working Paper no. 40-- Careers Education in the 1970s--provided to the schools (Schools Council, 1972).

1971 saw the Careers Research Advisory Centre (CRAC) expand from its very efficient careers information function into the production of active classroom materials, often involving simulation. It is still expanding this line.

1972 saw the amalgamation of the National Association of Careers Teachers and the National Association of Guidance Counselors. The future may hold a National Institute of Guidance with even wider affiliations. There must be a message somewhere in this.

1972 saw the Department of Education & Science undertaking a national survey of Careers Education in schools. The results were far less encouraging than this simplified account may have so far conveyed. They do indicate, however, considerable movement afoot.

1972 saw the rising of the school leaving age to 16. Necessity provides keen stimulus.

The 1970s have seen strong growth in the concept of the community school. This implies a new openness of relationship between teachers, students, society, and local industry.

By 1970 some 40% of the country's children had "gone comprehensive."

By 1976 this figure has reached 70%-80%, though not all in genuine comprehensive situations. The teaching profession is less divided in its fundamental concerns.

By 1975 there was national acceptance of the proposal that GCE and CSE should merge in the future into one "common system of examining." That proposal is now coming closer to achievement.

In 1975 all teachers received a very substantial pay raise. It has increased their confidence and willingness to deal directly with careers education.

In 1976 one and a half million people, including a high proportion of school leavers, are unemployed in Britain. They give real point to the need for schools to prepare their students for, as a parent once put it, "the after life!"

The '70s then are alive with promise. Curriculum rethinking and resourcing is leading toward a more generous concept of general and continuing education; tutorial care and guidance are accepted professional responsibilities; careers education is beginning to exert the sort of influence that may eventually remove the necessity for the word "careers" at all and enable it to be embraced naturally within the normal outgoing vision of every school's function (Schools Council, 1975). It will take longer than many care to allow, but the bands which now link children's educational, personal, and career development into a recognizable coherence seem tough enough to stand the strains of movement into the '80s.

Career and Careers Education

How then do career and careers education compare? While recognizing that the discussions of these movements in the United States and Great Britain have done little more than serve as summaries of the total efforts, it is perhaps most important to note that rather clearly identified similarities and differences do exist.

Differences that show up appear associated with educational systems in the two countries. As was revealed in the previous sections of this paper, career education in the United States slowly evolved from a broad

range of ideas and concepts which many educators have believed in for quite some time. Though there had been much concern about this area and a number of false starts made, career education actually began to be recognized and gain momentum through federal support of, and involvement with, the movement. Britain, on the other hand, had been restricted in the amount of effort which could be put forth in careers education because of educational structure (comprehensive vs. selective schooling). Careers education has, likewise, received substantial support from the national level; however, this support would have been wasted had there not been a major movement toward comprehensive schooling.

It is obvious that both countries have a strong commitment to career education. Development of position papers and the national support for career education curricula and materials provide evidence that legislators and the general public are willing to invest in this concept. The fact that a careers education and guidance project was jointly funded from national industry reflects a commitment extending well beyond the British educational sector. Interestingly enough, both this project and the U.S.O.E. career education models were funded beginning in 1971! Even though it is perhaps coincidental that these projects started about the same time, one might infer that both countries were, in their own way, prepared to actually "try out" career education on a large scale basis. The fact that both countries have not yet discarded it speaks well for career education as an international movement rather than just a national one.

Conceptually, there may be some differences between career and careers education. However, these do not seem to be fundamental in nature. Careers education has, at least for the present, tended to focus on better meeting British youngsters' needs. The Schools Council Career Education and

Guidance Project has been directed toward supporting and encouraging youngsters to understand themselves, bringing the world of work into the classroom, helping children to understand their responsibility in the community, and providing opportunities to practice decision making. This might be roughly comparable to career exploration aspects of the school-based career education model. The fact that career education in the United States has been explained as being "cradle to grave" does not make it all that different from careers education. British proponents have merely chosen to focus on a more narrow aspect of the careers spectrum. Work initiated at the 13 to 14 year age level has recently been expanded to include youngsters through 18 years of age.

Career and careers education may be seen as integral parts of the school curriculum. In each case, emphasis has been placed on the involvement of youngsters in learning about and preparing to engage in work. This is accomplished through active participation in role playing, simulation games, and similar sorts of activities.

Finally, there is an ultimate honor that could be bestowed upon career and careers education. This would be assimilation into the schools such that the term "career" or "careers" would no longer be needed. The elimination of these terms would mean that their functions had been absorbed into the ongoing school situation.

Some Concluding Remarks

The business of summarizing two major educational movements in different countries has been a most challenging task and one which is certainly not completed. This paper should provide some direction in the exploration of career education as an international movement. It is hoped that all

who are involved with career education and careers education will benefit from this sort of comparative examination. Hopefully, other comparative studies of career education will follow!

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